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BOROUGH OF CHARD

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ended 31st December, 1938.

*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of
the Borough of Chard.*

GENTLEMEN,

Once again I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health. It speaks for itself, but I would like to comment on a few items in the report.

Firstly, I regret that the number of births of the year is the lowest on record—about a third of those a few years back. Part of the cause may be the scarcity of houses for people desiring to marry—a matter that surely can be remedied. Although so much has been accomplished, houses are still insufficient in number—there has been very little increase in the supply of houses available for those of moderate means. The quality—size, airspace, conveniences, &c.—of the houses of Chard is greatly improved, but demolition of unfit houses has kept pace fairly well with rebuilding and as the individual family is smaller the need of more houses still exists, although the population is not greater. The deaths (52) are moderate in number but are at more advanced ages. There was one death in the first ten years of life but that was at the age of 2 hours only and so came near to being a still birth. Then there was only one death between 10 and 20 years, one again between 20 and 30, one between 30 and 40 and one again between 40 and 50. Between 50 and 60 there were 9, between 60 and 70 there were 10, from 70 to 80 sixteen, from 80 to 90 11, and one over 90 years. So in Chard we are becoming a fairly long lived race, and one may say that the majority die in or from old age.

I am indebted to Mr. Webb, the Sanitary Inspector, for the tables re housing activities, re sanitary inspections of dairies, slaughter houses, &c., and for taking samples of the public water supply, &c.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT SUTHERLAND.

June, 1939.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area, 920 Acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population mid 1938, 4,306.

Number of inhabited houses according to rate books (end of 1938), 1,255.

Rateable Value, £25,394.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £97.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.—There has been little change from those given in former reports. The closing down of one large bobbin lace net factory caused, naturally, some increase in our unemployment figures, but the opening of a long disused factory as

an engineering works and foundry has somewhat offset this, and we hope that the recently closed factory will ere long be re-opened for some fresh manufactures, and there is a prospect of another industry being started in other new premises.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS.

		Totals.		M.	F.
Live Births	Legitimate ...	32	14	18	
	Total 36 { Illegitimate ...	4	3	1	
Birth rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 8.36.					
Still Births	Legitimate ...	2	2	0	
	Total 3 { Illegitimate ...	1	1	0	
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births, 77.					

Deaths 52 32 20
Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 12.07.

Deaths from Puerperal causes, nil. Rate nil.

Death rate of Infants under 1 year of age:—

All Infants per 1,000 live births... 27.77
(one death)

Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births 30.30

Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ... 6

" " Measles (all ages) ... nil

" " Whooping Cough (all ages) nil

" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) nil

There was no unusual or excessive mortality from any one cause.

Death rate of England and Wales as a whole, 11 6.

Our local death rate, reduced by comparability factor, 9.29.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—The Registrar-General divides these into 36 categories. In 20 of these categories there were no deaths, so I will skip them.

Influenza	caused	2 deaths
Respiratory Tuberculosis ..	1	"
Non-Resp. Tuberculosis ..	1	"
Cancer	6	"
Diabetes	1	"
Cerebral hæmorrhage ..	4	"
Heart Disease	11	"
Circulatory Disease other than Cerebral Hæm., Heart Disease and Aneurism ...	1	"
Bronchitis	1	"
Appendicitis... ..	1	"
Digestive Disease other than Septic Ulcer, Diarrhoea, Appendicitis and Lung Diseases ..	2	"
Acute and Chr. Nephritis ..	3	"
Congenital Debility and Prem. Birth	1	"
Senility	5	"
Suicide	2	"
Other defined diseases ..	4	"

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

1 Public Health Officers of the Authority:
Medical Officer of Health,
ROBERT SUTHERLAND, M.B., Ch.B. Vict.
Part time only.

2 Sanitary Inspector,
P. H. WEBB, M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.
Part time only.

Assistant Sanitary Inspector,
A. L. LARCOMBE. Part time only.

There are no changes to be recorded re laboratory facilities, ambulance, nursing in the homes, clinics and treatment centres or hospitals.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER. No change has been made in the public water supply. It has proved satisfactory in quantity and reports as to its quality have been very good except for one report in August that the sample sent showed "evidence of contamination although not in a marked degree." The next sample sent in September showed "No evidence of harmful contamination and all the other samples before and since reported "No evidence of contamination and the results are satisfactory."

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—No alteration.

RIVERS and STREAMS.—No special action required.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.—No change.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Inspections for Sewerage and Drainage	124
Inspections for nuisances	32
Informal notices served	58
Drainage tests and inspections ..	71
Houses disinfected	24
Dairies and Cowsheds Inspections	28
Water Works Inspections	81
Slaughter House Inspections ..	349

RIVERS AND STREAMS.—No action required.

SHOPS AND OFFICES.—Found satisfactory.

CAMPING SITES.—Nil.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.—No action taken.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.—One only at the Grammar School and fresh water kept running in almost continuously. No special disinfection.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.—No action required.

SCHOOLS — Sanitary conditions satisfactory.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT—Continued.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

NUMBER OF NEW HOUSES ERECTED DURING THE YEAR.—

- (i) By Local Authority.
With State Assistance :—
(a) Rehousing under Housing Act, 1936 36
(b) Overcrowding 12
(c) Other 36
Without State Assistance .. nil
- (ii) By other bodies or persons :
(a) With State Assistance nil
(b) Without State Assistance .. 12

I. HOUSING INSPECTIONS :—

- 1 (a) Total number of dwellinghouses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 72
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 220
2. (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 and 1932 .. 55
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 186
(c) Number of houses in which no action was found necessary 5
3. Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. 33
4. Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 17

II. HOUSING ACTION :

- (a) Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of *informal* action by the Local Authority or their Officers 4
(b) Number of houses demolished voluntarily or in consequence of informal action 3

III. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR :—

A. PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTIONS 9, 10 AND 16 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :

- (1) Number of dwellinghouses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs. 9
(2) Number of dwellinghouses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices.
(a) By owners 9
(b) By local authority in default of owners nil

B. PROCEEDINGS UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS :—

- (1) Number of dwellinghouses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 17
(2) Number of dwellinghouses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—
(a) By owners 17
(b) By local authority in default of owners nil

C. PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTIONS 11, 13 AND 26 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :

- (1) Number of dwellinghouses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 8
(2) Number of dwellinghouses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders nil
(3) (a) Clearance Orders made .. 3
(b) Number of houses involved 25
(4) Clearance Orders confirmed .. 3
(a) Number of houses involved 25
(b) Number of houses demolished 2
(c) Number of houses to be demolished 22

D. PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTION 12 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :

- (1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit nil

IV HOUSING ACT, 1936—

OVERCROWDING :—

- (a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year 11
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein 12
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein 61
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year 6
(c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year 12
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases 89
(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding none known
(e) Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report nil

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD. MILK SUPPLY.

- Number of Producers on the Register. . 11
Number of Distributors on the Register divided as follows :—
(a) Distributors only 10
(b) Distributors who are also producers 2

(A producer is only included as a distributor if he definitely makes a business of selling his milk by retail to individual customers).

Number of licences given to Graded Milk Distributors nil
The Dairies are not all up to date in structure and conveniences, but are kept in good condition.

MEAT SUPERVISION.

Slaughterhouses : Licenced 4, Registered 1, Total 5. The Slaughterhouses are in good condition and are kept clean and satisfactory.

Carcasses inspected :

Cattle including Oxen and Maiden	
Heifers and Barreners	294
Cows	67
Calves	109
Sheep and Lambs	624
Pigs	780

All diseases except Tuberculosis.

Whole carcasses condemned :

Cattle including cows	nil
Cows	nil
Pigs	nil
Sheep	1

Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned :

Cattle including cows	20
Calves	1
Sheep and Lambs	61
Pigs	3

Tuberculosis only.

Whole carcasses condemned :

Cattle	2
Pigs	2

Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned :

Cattle	11
Calves	2
Pigs	24

(c) Adulteration, &c. Action taken nil.

(d) Chemical and bacteriological examination of food. County laboratories undertake this work.

(e) Nutrition. No local public action taken to increase the knowledge of the public on the subject.

(f) No shell fish beds or layings are in the district.

SECTION F.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

There was little notifiable disease. Eight cases of diphtheria perhaps call for comment. A newcomer to Chard arrived with the disease and before it was recognised infected two others. All three were promptly sent away to Taunton Isolation Hospital and no further infection was noted. Later in the year 2 mild cases developed after a visit to a place where an outbreak was occurring and they infected two others but all were of a mild character and were soon well. The eighth case was a solitary one, its source unknown. One case of dysentery was brought by a visitor, as was the malaria.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

(other than Tuberculosis).

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Small Pox	nil	—	—
Scarlet Fever	1	nil	nil
Diphtheria	8	3	nil
Enteric Fever			
(inc. Para-typhoid) nil	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia .. 1	1	nil	nil
Ophthalmia			
Neonatorum 1	1	nil	nil
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	nil	—	—
Dysentery	2	nil	nil
Malaria (contracted abroad)	1	nil	nil
Pneumonia	2	nil	1
Acute Poliomyelitis nil	—	—	—
Encephalitis			
Lethargia	nil	—	—
Other diseases notifiable locally, e.g. Chicken Pox	nil	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1938.

Age Periods.	New Cases.		Deaths.	
	Respiratory.	Non-Respir.	Respir.	Non-Respir.
0	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—
5	—	1	—	—
15	2	—	—	—
25	1	—	—	1
35	1	—	—	—
45	1	—	1	—
55	—	1	1	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—
Totals	4	2	2	1

All the cases were notified before death and there has not to my knowledge been any wilful neglect or refusal to notify.